

# Options For A New Fence

Fencing is at the crux of American homeownership. The vast majority of homes, young and old, rural and urban, utilize some type of fencing on the property. Fences serve a variety of purposes, from privacy to security to landscape appeal. And just as uses for fencing vary, so do the materials available for fence building. Wood, vinyl, aluminum, and iron fencing are all popular fencing materials. Each material has its own range of styles and grades.

## Vinyl Fencing

Vinyl fencing is made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and has several benefits over other fencing materials. Vinyl fencing is more expensive than its competitors but has incredible longevity and is maintenance-free. It is only limited by a small range of available colors. Most vinyl fences are designed in the picket fence style but are also available in privacy, ranch, and pool fence styles.

## Wood Fencing

There are three main types of wood fencing: privacy, picket, and rail fences. Conventional types of wood used include cedar, pine, redwood, cypress, and more. The availability of each will depend on the region.

- Privacy fences serve to provide the homeowner with seclusion and an intimate setting in the back or front yard. Usually six to eight feet tall, privacy fences are common in both urban and suburban environments.
- Picket fences, led by the white picket fence, are a truly American tradition. They are shorter than a privacy fence (3-4 feet tall) and are not intended to allow privacy so much as an enclosed yard and a colonial style. Styles of picket fencing include arched, scalloped, gothic, French gothic, dog-eared, and standard flat-top.
- Rail fences are prevalent in rural areas such as farms and ranches, where animal containment is necessary. Rail fences consist of round, square, board, or split rails attached to posts. They allow an uninterrupted view of the landscape. Often, a mesh wire is combined with rail fence framing to keep smaller animals in or out.

## Chain Link Fencing

Chain link fences are classic in both residential and commercial settings. They provide many years of security and privacy. Most chain link fences will have that standard, "silver" look to them, but they come in a surprisingly wide range of colors, qualities, sizes, and types. Chain link fences are usually coated with galvanized zinc, giving them that silver color, which protects them from rusting. They also come in a variety of gauges and post sizes. The rule of thumb here is the smaller the gauge number, the tougher the fence. Conversely, the wider the post, the stronger it will be. Wide posts are typically used at corners with smaller posts along the runs.

## Iron Fencing

Iron fencing has long combined both beauty and function in residential, commercial, and industrial situations. Also known as ornamental fencing, it was originally made from wrought iron. Steel or aluminum are now incorporated into production. Most commercial and industrial fences are made using welded or assembled steel. Aluminum is more common in the residential arena. Iron fences can be designed with pickets above or below the fence's top rail. Also, aside from its customized, ornamental appeal, iron fencing provides security by keeping unwanted prowlers out and pets and children in the yard.

## **Aluminum Fencing**

Aluminum fencing, also an ornamental fence, is very similar to iron fencing but offers heightened durability and little or no maintenance. Modern ornamental fences are either hybrids, utilizing both steel and aluminum, or solely aluminum.

Aluminum fences are powder-coated for longevity and use brackets as post-to-rail connectors. This avoids the fragile, rust-prone welds so common with conventional wrought iron fences. Styles and designs for aluminum fencing include a growing range of colors, including black, white, bronze, and even green.

Similar to chain link fencing, aluminum fences come in different picket, post, and rail sizes. These differences will determine the strength of the fence. For aluminum, the larger the picket, the stronger the fence. Aluminum fences are much cheaper than iron fences because they are much easier to install. On a broader scale, aluminum typically falls somewhere between vinyl and wood fencing in terms of cost.

## **Wood Privacy Fence Options**

There are three wood privacy fence designs that rank among the top. These include the lattice-top, shadowbox and your basic privacy fence. Cedar, cypress and pressure treated pine are the most common types of wood used to construct these fences which usually range from 6 to 8 feet tall. You will sometimes see these privacy fence designs used for fences that are less than 6 feet tall, but they aren't really considered privacy fences. Any fence less than 6 feet tall is usually there for decoration or to keep in a pet and are not recommended for privacy.

Of the three types of wood I mentioned above, treated pine is the most popular material for building wood privacy fences. This is because it cost less than other types of wood and will last a long time when it's exposed to the outdoor weather. A lot of people choose to go with cedar when building their fence because of the red color and how it holds up to the weather. What most people don't realize is that after a couple years, you can't hardly tell the difference between a pine fence and a cedar fence. They both turn to a grayish color and last around the same amount of time. The main difference between the two is the price of cedar is much higher. Cypress probably last the longest out of the three, but it can sometimes be hard to find, and it costs more than pine.

The most common style of privacy fence is the basic, treated pine, privacy fence which is made by simply butting pickets together so that it's difficult to see between them. This is the style that

you see used in most neighborhoods to give homeowners privacy in their backyards. A lot of people have the misconception that once they get one of these fences built that nobody will be able to see through the fence. This is not the case most of the time. Pressure treated wood has a tendency to shrink as it dries out. This means that even if your fence is built with all the boards touching tight together, gaps will eventually form between the pickets in almost all cases.

The second most common privacy fence design is the shadowbox. This fence starts out like a basic privacy fence that has approximately 2" wide gaps between each picket rather than them being butted together. In addition to having pickets on the outside of the fence, there's also pickets on the inside of the fence that are spaced approximately 2" apart as well. The gap between the pickets on the inside of the fence are lined up with the center of the pickets on the outside of the fence so that you can't see straight through the fence. There's boards (usually 2"x4" in size) that run between the pickets on the outside and the inside of the fence. This causes the fence to have a shadow effect.

The lattice-top privacy fence is the third most popular style of wood privacy fencing. This design starts out as a basic privacy with the addition of lattice added to the top. The lattice gets framed in with additional lumber for support. Most people agree that the lattice top is the best looking of the three styles. The only drawback is the price. The material cost is higher, and there's a considerable amount of additional labor involved.

Learn more at <http://www.shollersfence.com>